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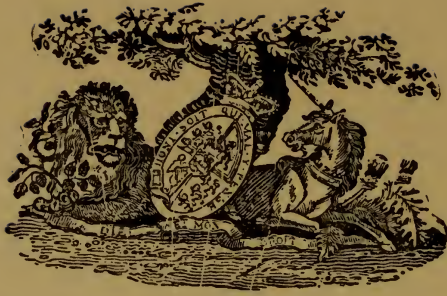
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Our American Heritage!

—*An Interpretation*

EARLE W. NEWTON





“Were American Newcomen to do naught else, our work is well done if we succeed in sharing with America a strengthened inspiration to continue the struggle towards a nobler Civilization—through wider knowledge and understanding of the hopes, ambitions, and deeds of leaders in the past who have upheld Civilization’s material progress. As we look backward, let us look forward.”

—CHARLES PENROSE

*Senior Vice-President for North America
The Newcomen Society of England*



This statement, crystallizing a broad purpose of the society, was first read at the Newcomen Meeting at New York World’s Fair on August 5, 1939, when American Newcomen were guests of The British Government

“Actorum Memores simul affectamus Agenda”

OUR AMERICAN HERITAGE!

An Interpretation

*An Address at Old Sturbridge Village
in Massachusetts*



AMERICAN NEWCOMEN, *through the years, has honored a number of museums and like institutions devoted to the preservation of History, both in the United States of America and in Canada. In 1951 this international Society honored Colonial Williamsburg in Virginia. In 1954 we are honoring Old Sturbridge Village in Massachusetts. Each has as its purpose to recreate the life and times, the manners and customs, the heritage and the treasures of Colonial America!*





“OLD STURBRIDGE VILLAGE” constitutes an early American community, reconstructed along banks of the Quinebaug River in Western Massachusetts, U.S.A., as it would have been about the Year 1790. It is a living museum of the New England heritage and a craft center where the spirit of American craftsmanship is revived and practised by artisans of today.



Our American Heritage!

—*An Interpretation*

EARLE W. NEWTON

MEMBER OF THE NEWCOMEN SOCIETY

EDITOR

“AMERICAN HERITAGE”

THE AMERICAN ASSN. FOR STATE AND LOCAL HISTORY

STURBRIDGE AND NEW YORK



THE NEWCOMEN SOCIETY IN NORTH AMERICA
NEW YORK SAN FRANCISCO MONTREAL

1954

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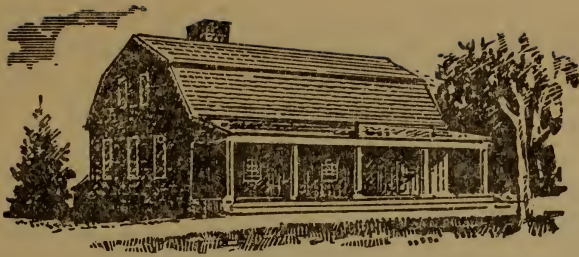
This Newcomen Address, dealing with American Heritage and Tradition as preserved by historical records and collections, was delivered at the "1954 New England Picnic" of The Newcomen Society in North America, held at Old Sturbridge Village, at Sturbridge, Massachusetts, U.S.A., when Mr. Newton was the guest of honor, on

June 24, 1954



SET UP, PRINTED AND BOUND IN THE UNITED STATES
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INTRODUCTION OF MR. NEWTON, AT OLD STURBRIDGE ON JUNE 24, 1954, BY DR. CLAUDE MOORE FUESS, HEADMASTER EMERITUS OF PHILLIPS ACADEMY, ANDOVER, MASSACHUSETTS; VICE-CHAIRMAN OF THE NEW ENGLAND COMMITTEE, IN THE NEWCOMEN SOCIETY IN NORTH AMERICA.

My fellow members of Newcomen:

OLD STURBRIDGE is a highly successful attempt to reproduce some aspects of our New England heritage and thus to recapture the spirit of a picturesque past. The idea was conceived in the 1930's by a group of imaginative and generous people, headed by Albert B. Wells and his family, and the project was opened to the public in 1946. This is a productive enterprise, where visitors may observe what ingenuity, properly directed, can achieve when it has had adequate financial support. Those who saw last Summer the presentation of *The Devil and Daniel Webster* know what is being accomplished here in music and the drama,—and this is only the beginning!



Earle Newton, our speaker today and the former Director of Old Sturbridge Village, is a Central New Yorker transplanted to a Yankee environment. No finer type exists in this Country. I am one of them myself! Modesty forbids my mentioning the three fine institutions at which he was educated: Andover, Amherst, and Columbia. Although he is only thirty-seven, he has made a name for himself as antiquarian, author, editor, and historian. He has been Director of the Vermont Historical Society, has published

several books, and will write many more. He is Editor of "American Heritage," published by The American Association for State and Local History, and Editor of "American States Series" (50 volumes).



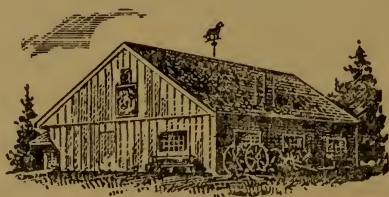
Newton had loads of fun while here, like a boy building with blocks and seeing things grow. Here, through his vision, there sprang up a unique and fascinating community. I was never quite sure what to expect next!

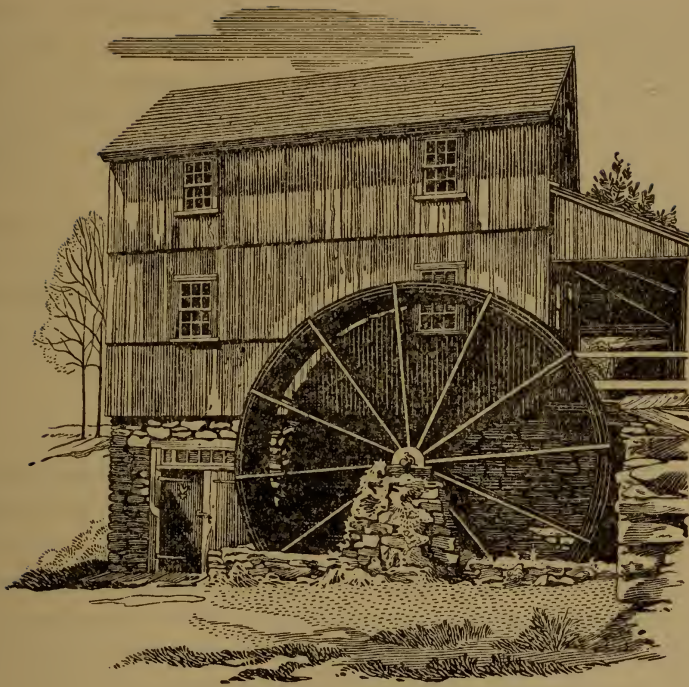


This is the type of venture which The Newcomen Society, with its traditions, does well to honor, for it is as truly American as a prosperous business or college. Newton himself has energy and resourcefulness, two characteristic American virtues. We should be proud of Old Sturbridge,—and of him!



As one long interested in and identified with Old Sturbridge Village, I am happy to introduce: EARLE WILLIAMS NEWTON.





My fellow members of Newcomen:

THese few words are on the subject of History, but I shall preface what is to be said by dealing first with a small matter of—shall we say—economics, namely: production and distribution. For in the field of History, as in manufacturing, we have these problems too.



Let's step first, *Mr. Chairman*, into the production department. It's a pretty well organized, smoothly running division, with an impressive record. Perhaps too much so, for it faces a situation of "over-production." In scores of colleges and universities all over the Country men hired to teach are also researching and writing on American History, for it has become standard practice for educational institutions to allow, even expect, their faculty to devote a portion of their time to research. Indeed, it is generally conceded that every teacher needs to refresh himself periodically "at the

sources" if he is not to go stale. The results of this work, plus the weighty dissertations of graduate students, pour out annually in a flood of manuscript and printed matter, in books and in learned journals. It is the basic material of our history—the first step in rendering the raw materials—documentary sources—into finished consumer goods. It is a quality product, commonly done with care and with little attention to union pay scales; it represents midnight oil, and often travel to distant parts; it involves a laborious piecing-together of puzzling and recalcitrant materials into an integrated whole, and often a period of near hopeless waiting for the missing link that eventually solves the puzzle.



Yet this "quality product" goes mostly into inventory. No one would admit that there really was a state of overproduction; surely it all *is* needed; the problem, therefore, is rather one of underconsumption. Something must be wrong with the channels of distribution. There is!



The average volume of history rarely reaches a readership of 5,000 (often a publisher's break-even point); few historical journals have that large a circulation, and honest editors admit that actual readership is far below circulation in most cases. Most go automatically and without charge to the membership of historical societies; and, while often admired, are—with a half-dozen exceptions—seldom read. Printing in scholarly quarterlies all too often represents printing for the library stacks, and thus for the few, isolated future researchers in a given field, whose work will be eased by the filtering process already done by their predecessors (if they trust it).



Historians occasionally gather in national and regional meetings to display their wares to one another, and the results, in a scholarly sense, are usually impressive. But they find it necessary again to register their dismay and puzzlement that the American general public is not sufficiently impressed to purchase their output, in any

reasonable volume. They have, they believe, devised a better mouse-trap, but the public is not beating a path to their door. Hence the economic problem: a situation of overproduction in relation to distribution, though certainly not in respect to consumer need.



The need *is* there. Surely we cannot assess current problems adequately in an historical vacuum. The individual makes constant reference to what he calls "experience" in making personal judgments looking toward the future. History is nothing more than the consolidated social experience of the community, State or Nation; and an intelligent acquaintanceship with this social experience we label "History" is essential to balanced judgment and responsible, democratic citizenship.



Furthermore there is a widespread recognition of this need—what almost seems sometimes a thirst for a deeper understanding of the American Heritage. In the face of a rising tide of doctrines subversive of what most people believe to be their basic freedom, Americans have been turning more and more to an examination of their origins. The average citizen is coming to realize that "roots" mean a great deal to him.



The millions who flocked to see historic American documents enshrined in "The Freedom Train" are indicative of the very real and active interest Americans have in their past. The resurgence and revivification of the Nation's historical societies and their tremendous increase in membership (sometimes 1,000 percent or more); the growth of the brand new outdoor museums of history like Colonial Williamsburg, Old Sturbridge Village, The Farmer's Museum, Mystic Seaport, and the tremendous visitation they experience (attendance here at Old Sturbridge Village, for example, has gone up 30 to 40 percent each year over the preceding, for five successive years), are all part of the same pattern. Americans are seeking out the roots of their national heritage.

The key to all this interest has been *effective interpretation*. Someone has acted as a go-between between the scholar and the public; and has told a story in terms the average man could understand. If I may shift from manufacturing to agriculture for the moment, we might draw a parallel between the farmer's eggs and the consumer's omelette: a good cook stood between one and the other as an essential intermediary. We need more good cooks who can serve up a tasty dish from authentic ingredients.



Popularization? Yes—I suppose so, though the very word troubles many a good scholar. Let's see what we mean by the word, by examining the differences between the scholar and the Interpreter:



There is a difference between the research scholar and the interpreter. The scholar is concerned with the compiling and *righting* of the historical record; the teacher with the interpretation and *writing* of the historical record. The first records results; the second interprets them.



Have these never been combined? Often—but largely in the college classroom. Here the teacher-researchist holds forth, enriching his lectures with the practical experience gained from detailed research. But there are factors which limit his effectiveness. His research is almost by necessity narrowly limited, and can color only a small portion of the broad canvas he must paint for the average student. Furthermore, his audience is a “captive audience,” confined not only by the physical bounds of the classroom, but also by certain definite learning compulsions. These students have made a definite investment in collegiate education, which can be realized only by surmounting the hurdle of examinations and the completion of a definite course of study. Having applied himself adequately to it, the undergraduate may expect to acquire his degree. His teacher thus has a great advantage in the compulsions under

which his audience listens. However dull or confusing he may become, his students must stay with him to the bitter end—and pass. He has few of the incentives to be clear and interesting, though there are many great teachers—interpreters—in our universities.



In any event, neither our professors nor our public school teachers have created among their graduates an enthusiastic readership for historical writings. Far more have experienced history in the public schools than in the colleges, and their experience was not a happy one. The routine of names and dates did not impress them as a significant educational experience, and is often recalled with distaste. How many times has “history” led the list when votes were taken for the “dullest” subjects?



But why?—when all the drama, romance, and excitement that ever existed are—obviously—in *history*! The fault lies with its interpreters. There is an obligation on our teachers to make their courses exciting as well as meaningful—especially those in the public schools, which reach far more people than our institutions of higher education.



But any improvement here—and there has been a great deal of it in the last decade—applies to a future generation. What of those who have already received their formal education—the very people who, in this democracy, vote, and otherwise influence public opinion? Here we face a problem in adult education: who will tackle it? The institutions of formal education? Probably not, for only a small proportion of the adult public will again submit itself to classroom captivity.



Oddly enough, it is the historical societies and museums which now are in the forefront of adult education in history—those very institutions we had assumed to be moribund, or at best, inextricably

bogged down in purposeless genealogy or trivial local and antiquarian pursuits. They have, in just the last decade, acquired a new, young, determined, and ingenious leadership of men, largely trained for college teaching, who caught the gospel and set out to get a wider audience for *The American Story*. None of them ignored the production end. One of their real achievements has been to reorganize, expand, and re-direct the research and collection programs of their institutions, which are the principal repositories of the source material of American History. They developed new and more competent systems of care and cataloging of manuscript material, and started a flow of indexes and guides to help the university scholar in his searches.



But they also sat down to analyze the breakdown in distribution. And they found these things wrong:

First, there was the subject matter. Was the standard subject matter of American History enough? Speaking from the fountain-head of source material, the great reservoirs of regional and local materials, they called for a re-examination and a new approach. American History has commonly been viewed exclusively from a national viewpoint, and a vast number of facile generalizations have been made to provide a sufficiently simple picture of American evolution. But examining these at the “grass roots”—at the regional and local level—we find so many exceptions to the rule that the “rule” hardly seems valid any longer.

Consequently those who have been close to the “grass-roots” of history have started re-writing it from the ground up. Using as laboratories their own areas, where economic, social, and political processes could be examined in detail, they have found that many of the broad generalizations just don’t stand up. From this testing, this re-examination, will come a new American History—as new, perhaps, as emerged from that awakening of American historians to the importance of economic and social history a score of years ago.

But no matter how the scholars re-write history, its dissemination is not necessarily forwarded thereby. It can still be dull, ponderous

—and unread. Fortunately there is a growing revolt among historians themselves—enthusiastically supported by their publishers I might add—against unnecessary dullness. They violently object to the idea that anything “scientific” cannot be literature. They have campaigned to get historians to write better—and surely there is a vast room for improvement. But few historians are or ever will be trained as writers; those that have a natural talent are therefore the group from which we must draw our principal interpreters—our chiefs of distribution.



Furthermore, it is not wise to distract our researchers too much from their patient, scholarly digging. This operation is as essential as any mining operation: sometimes it produces gold, sometimes dross, sometimes semi-precious materials—but it must go on. And the analysis which the scholar undertakes—with its laborious balancing of facts, its careful weighing of partial evidence, its bulk of supporting footnotes—is after all the sound, indispensable basis of all historical research.



Even if we discover and mobilize those few who can, by an inspired pen, translate authentic material into well-written books, we have not yet reached a very broad audience. The best-sellers in history still do not sell well. But those of us who have felt that historical societies are institutions of adult education, as well as historical warehouses, found new methods of using the printed word. In addition to an expanding series of books on State and local history, these societies rejuvenated their historical quarterlies and found for them new readership; the Wisconsin and Minnesota societies, for example, have led in this. Some have published special “junior” journals for the kids, to catch interest in its earliest stages; the New York State Historical Association’s *Yorker* has been outstanding in this group. Some have retained their quarterlies as scholarly journals, and begun separate publications of a popular character to reach the populace they could never hope to interest in membership. The Virginia State Library History Division’s

Virginia Cavalcade is the newest and most colorful of these; *Vermont Life*, begun in 1946 by joint cooperation of the Vermont Historical Society and The Vermont Development Commission, reached out to nearly a quarter of a million readers, outside of Vermont as well as inside, with its fourth issue. I can remember when I first talked the Governor of Vermont into putting up enough money to print the first issue, and how we put out 12,000 copies with the expectation we'd have to give away 10,000 of them. We were as surprised as anyone when all 12,000 went over the newsstands in three days, and when the same thing happened to the next two issues of, respectively, 20,000 and 25,000 copies. There *was* interest in colorfully presented history that comes up to date; we proved it in one of the smallest and thriftiest States in the Union. And we found the same audience, or larger, awaiting a weekly radio program of dramatized history, carried over several stations, and tied into a weekly newspaper column of background material. We found it for a weekly cartoon panel that the newspapers were willing to purchase, for a color-illustrated volume of State history as well as a movie based on it by the great documentary producers, Robert and David Flaherty. This film sent its message not only throughout the State, but throughout the world; it was screened on Broadway, and translated by the U.S. State Department into thirty-six languages for circulation in other lands.



An even broader program is carried out by the societies of larger States, like Wisconsin, which with an annual budget of over a quarter of a million, projects a major research program based on one of the Nation's largest collections of historical books and manuscripts, runs the State archives, publishes both senior and junior magazines, manages historic sites throughout the State, and even sends forth a "historymobile" to carry its museum program over the roads to every part of Wisconsin. The Vermont Society, with one-tenth the budget, is at the opposite pole; but large or small, historical societies have found ways of making pennies do a dollar's work toward a program of effective interpretation of the American Heritage.

These societies, under new leadership, have given the printed word new meaning and new dissemination, not only in their own regions, but nationally. Banded together in the American Association for State and Local History—a formidable title which no longer represents the breadth of their program—they have begun sponsorship of programs of a national import. Some of these are professional in character, others “popular.” Among the latter the most distinctive is its magazine: *American Heritage*.



American Heritage we began in 1949, building on the editorial formula which had then proven itself in *Vermont Life*. It started much the same way—on a shoestring—when the Association risked its entire bank account of \$2,000 to print its first issue, in the faith that a steady flow of subscription revenue would print the rest. That issue, and all subsequent, with their extensive illustration and use of color, have cost more to produce and distribute, at low-beginning subscription levels, than the sale price brought back. Donations from foundations and interested individuals have, over the past five years, helped undertake promotion necessary to steady growth of the subscription list—for, unlike the State magazines, it is not available at newsstands. Now near the 20,000 level, it enters a new stage of growth; venture capital, confident in its promise, has entered the picture to expand it and, if calculations are right, push it past the 50,000 mark over the next two years. Its future, we hope, will be to do for the field of American History what the *National Geographic* did for the field of geography: to take a subject people thought dull and uninteresting and interpret its inherent drama and significance to a broad audience.



The printed word is still Man's most effective means of communication with other men, especially in the realm of ideas. But it is not the only means. Figure for a moment how you get the bulk of your information. It's through visual images—some, it is true, of words on a printed page, but relatively a small proportion. Of the endless flow of images that pass through eyes to brain during your waking hours, only a few are words; most are impressions

of actual objects or their representations in pictorial or graphic form. Historical societies—and adult education generally—are making broad use of pictorial and graphic material. What I have already described of their programs—which include motion pictures, film strips for schools, graphic and pictorial as well as textual material for newspapers, programs for radio and television—indicates the active fashion in which they have undertaken to use the standard media of public communication to reach that great amorphous mass called The American Public—which is certainly far from a “captive” audience, and which quickly rejects “educational” material that is not also both colorful and significant.



These historical agencies have uncovered an additional discovery—that they can make as effective use of actual objects as they can of textual descriptions and pictorial representations. The *historical museum*, usually thought of as a dusty, musty collection of curios, has begun to come into its own, and, under the leadership of the U.S. National Park Service, lively and intriguing exhibits have been made using new combinations of words, pictures, and actual objects. The latter, instead of being isolated relics, become three-dimensional interpretive devices, to be carefully related to the other techniques of telling a story or imparting information.



Sometimes these objects get awfully big—like houses. Houses are pretty hard to display under glass, as are steam engines, boats, carriages, and similar remnants of another age. The result has been, of course the preservation of historic houses, sites and monuments, which became important shrines where Americans go to renew their faith in America. Hundreds of thousands annually visit Mt. Vernon, Monticello, or Independence Hall, or the national historic sites at Morristown, Yorktown, and Jamestown.



The effectiveness of these actual monuments of the past in interpreting it gave the historians a new urge—to recreate the past

in three dimensions, as we have previously done in the two dimensions of the picture or the single dimension of the written or spoken word.



Because no community has stood still, any such project necessarily involved restoring an entire area, or moving in representative, original structures from elsewhere to a new site. Colonial Williamsburg, a restoration now a quarter-century old and still growing, was the first and is still the greatest of these projects. But the munificence of John D. Rockefeller Jr. has not been repeated elsewhere, and is unlikely to be again.



Old Sturbridge Village is the largest and most complete of the "synthetic" villages—that is, a village the parts of which are (with a few special exceptions) authentic structures, but which have been assembled on a new site in the form of a representative, or "sample" community. Because American Newcomen is here today, where you can see at first hand what I am talking about, because it offers a less costly pattern than the full restoration with, in many respects, equal effectiveness, and because I know it best, I'd like to describe the Village as a representative example of three-dimensional interpretation, a significant segment of The American Past.



Let's first take a look at the Village to see how it began, because to do so throws light on its present status. Its co-founder, Albert B. Wells, then Chairman of the Board, American Optical Company, was a great golfer, but not much interested in old or antiquarian things. One day, rained out of a game at Manchester, Vermont, he allowed himself to be dragged along on an "antiquing" expedition by fellow executives of the company. Much to his surprise, he found these examples of old-time craftsmanship fascinating, and came home with an armload. Perhaps it was because he was a precision manufacturer and could appreciate the work of the dedicated artisan—at any rate he began collecting everything he could find—wholesale—until he collected himself quite liter-

ally out of house and home, and had to move out. Eventually, facing the need of a museum, he asked the opinion of his son, George B. Wells, about a plan for a structure to be erected across the street. "Why don't you," his son suggested, "return these things to their natural environment—build a village instead?" The idea so took "A. B." that he enlisted the aid of his brother, J. Cheney Wells (who had been collecting too, but almost exclusively clocks). They began construction in 1936.



Progress slowed during the war years, but, by 1946, there were enough buildings to open the growing Village to the public. Mr. A. B. Wells having fallen seriously ill, his daughter-in-law, Mrs. George B. Wells, took the helm for three years, and saw to the erection of the two principal buildings—the Meetinghouse and the Tavern—among others. She also began a program of modern crafts, in order to project the inspiration of 18th Century craftsmanship into the present. By 1949, public interest had risen to the point where it was felt by the family that, within a reasonable time, public support should take over. After consulting outside experts, a committee of the trustees expressed great confidence in its future and drew up a plan calling for the construction of eating, lodging, and amphitheatre facilities, as well as completion of the museum village and development of its allied craft program.



It was then, in 1950, that I came to the Village as its new Director, and began the program of expansion which became urgently necessary as attendance tripled over the next four years. The famous old "Publick House" in nearby Sturbridge was supplemented by three new inns: The Tavern, The Lodge, and the Lincoln House, either in or at the entrance to the Village. The great new amphitheatre was completed in 1953. Service facilities were expanded, and two covered bridges, one at the entrance and one at the exit, marked the completion of a new traffic plan, devised to route the visitor through a logical development of village growth.

It is this latter plan that is the key to the interpretive pattern of this "teaching museum." Unlike a restoration, which is rebuilt exactly to its original pattern—so far as it can be determined—this *re-created* Village grew gradually, and acquired its interpretive pattern only after it was nearly complete. Because each building was itself to be an authentic, original structure, each had to be integrated to the rest upon its acquisition, within a generalized program.



As it stands now Old Sturbridge Village falls into four principal areas, each of which represents a stage in village growth:

The visitor first approaches the farm, an almost self-contained economic unit, which was the beginning of the late Eighteenth—early Nineteenth Century frontier town. Unlike the early days, when proprietors laid out a town around a Green and then migrated in a group to settle it, proprietors were now predominantly speculators, who sought enterprising farmers to settle in their frontier community. Because there usually were few farms in the beginning, they had to be largely self-supporting, not only agriculturally, but mechanically. It was from these farmer-mechanics that the well-known Yankee *inventiveness* stemmed. Each was usually an artisan of sorts as well, and usually had a shop in addition to his agricultural buildings. Our farmer, Pliny Freeman, was a maker of ox yokes.

Settlers demanded and speculator-proprietors encouraged the building of essential mills. Premiums in land were granted to anyone who would build, and the grist mill and saw mill came early, to grind the farmer's grain and saw his timber. A little "mill village" often grew up around the new mill-pond, the town's main source of power, and the blacksmith—important for iron work even more than for shoeing—often located there amongst these first industries.



As population grew, it began to develop a need for public enterprises: a tavern for its social life; a meeting-house for its religious

and political life; a school for its educational life; a store for its commercial life. These commonly were built around the "common" or "green" laid out by the proprietors—though there was often a bitter fight amongst various segments of the town to get each new building located in its own area. As these new aspects of community life multiplied, there came to the community the professional people: minister, doctor, lawyer, store-keeper, schoolmaster, and perhaps even a truly wealthy man—all of whom tended to build their somewhat more elaborate homes around the Village Green. And this is the picture we see around the Green at Old Sturbridge Village, the third major area and stage of community development—for now we have an actual community replacing a New England "town" of scattered farms.



Then, as the Village grew, its economic life became more prosperous and more specialized. Supporting not only a store, with its beginnings of a cash economy, it began to offer opportunity for industry—not factories, of course, but individual craftsmen. Early to the community, if it was fortunate, was the editor-printer, and he was often—like our Isaiah Thomas—the most influential personage for miles around. Thomas was known nationally. There were also the cabinet-maker, boot-maker, potter, gun-smith, silver-smith, clock-maker, and a multitude of other "specialists" (who usually farmed as well). These can be found in their shops in the craft area to the north of the Old Sturbridge "Green." Nearby are the modern shops of the independent craftsmen associated with but not part of the Village, who create with modern tools, in contemporary design, fine handcrafted products for their own times—exactly as did their 18th Century predecessors.



The Sturbridge visitor then exits by the old Dummerston Covered Bridge—one of the great triumphs of Yankee engineering—having seen not only the functional aspects of life as it was lived a century to a century and a half ago in rural New England, but also having gained an insight into the growth processes of these

towns. It has had a reality for him that no printed description, no pictorial representation could ever have: the sight, sounds, smell, and even the sense of a "living" re-creation. From the doorways of the homes the housewife welcome him in, and may demonstrate for him weaving, candle-dipping, or cooking; the tavern-keeper serves him food; the store-keeper retails old penny candies; the blacksmith shoes a horse; the miller grinds grain; and the other craftsmen demonstrate their trades as they were a hundred or more years ago. One has the sense of stepping back in time, and thereby gains an understanding impossible in any other way. Amidst the 3-D movie dither, here is a true three-dimensional "living" re-creation of something long dead and gone—a chapter of history brought back to life.



It is a technique now increasingly used by historical organizations who have discovered that their story can be told far more effectively with the elbow room and natural environment of the great outdoors. And a pattern of regional and chronological interpretation is beginning to emerge. The earnest traveler-historian may see the very earliest community of the 1620's re-created at "Pioneer Salem," Massachusetts, as well as a later frontier village at Deerfield, Massachusetts. He can set against the rural simplicity of Yankee Old Sturbridge Village the aristocratic town-life of Virginia's colonial capital, Williamsburg. Also in contrast to this rural life is the seafaring story as told at the Marine Museum's Mystic Seaport, Connecticut. And the life of the migrants westward to New York State can be seen in the mid-19th Century "Four Corners" of the Farmer's Museum of Cooperstown. Out in the Midwest, in the Henry Ford Museum and Greenfield Village at Dearborn, Michigan, where American industrial life came into full flower, can be seen the picture of late 19th Century and early 20th Century industrial development.



There are many other growing outdoor museums, including partial restorations of ghost towns of the Old West, as well as

groupings of historic buildings for museum exhibit purposes, as at Shelburne, Vermont, and Smith's Cove, New York. A durable traveler can see a lot of American History in 3-D without ever entering a theatre.



Well, herein is our picture of what historians *as interpreters* are doing today, not only in print, but in wood, bricks, and stone. A new appreciation of the American Heritage on the part of an increasing number of Americans has come from it. I trust I have shown why "popularization" of history, based on authentic materials, is necessary and possible, and how it can be, and is being done! But there is much more to do, and I sincerely hope that such historical endeavors will have the support of the business as well as the academic community. There is much which you industrialists, bankers, business and professional men, as trustees of museums and historical societies, or just as interested parties, can do to help us educators in our *distribution* problems. At the moment it looks as though *production* is well in hand!

THE END



*"Actorum Memores simul
affectamus Agenda!"*





THIS NEWCOMEN ADDRESS, *dealing with American History and its interpretation*, was delivered at the "1954 New England Picnic" of The Newcomen Society in North America, held in "Old Sturbridge Village" at Sturbridge, Massachusetts, U.S.A., on June 24, 1954. MR. NEWTON, *the guest of honor*, was introduced by DR. CLAUDE M. FUESS, *Headmaster Emeritus of Phillips Academy, Andover, Massachusetts; Vice-Chairman of the New England Committee, in American Newcomen. The picnic was presided over by DR. KARL T. COMPTON, Chairman of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge; Chairman of the New England Committee, in this international society.*





WELCOME BY OLD STURBRIDGE VILLAGE



“Old Sturbridge Village is indeed honored today by the visit of American Newcomen. On behalf of the Board of Trustees and of our staff I wish to extend our warmest welcome to all of you.

“We hope you will find this “New England Picnic” and meeting an interesting and worthwhile occasion, and your trip *back into the early days of our New England life* a pleasing excursion. We believe an understanding of our heritage from the past has value for the present and the future, that a Society aware of its origins and its traditions is better able to meet the tests of today and tomorrow.

“As you explore *this recreated segment of our American Past*, you will share the feelings of admiration and respect that nearly half a million other visitors have discovered within themselves for the individual and community achievements of our New England forebears.

“Again, let me say how privileged we feel today to welcome the members of The Newcomen Society in North America.”

—FRANK O. SPINNEY

Director, Old Sturbridge Village

Associate Treasurer, New England Committee

The Newcomen Society in North America





NEW ENGLAND PICNICS



OLD Sturbridge Village calls our attention to the following, taken from *A Historical Sketch of Sturbridge and Southbridge*, written by George Davis, in 1856:

“It was formerly a custom of the inhabitants, on certain days in the Autumn, to gather about these ponds to enjoy a season of festivity and amusement. Pork, fish, green corn, crackers, and cider composed the bill of fare. Although not much particularity was regarded in preparing them for the palate, nothing could relish better. These festivities were seasoned with toasts, jokes, and an abundance of other sorts of pleasantry. After the enjoyments of the table were closed, some exhibited their adroitness in swimming, some in pitching quoits, and all as their fancy dictated. All quit, at a seasonable hour, much gratified. This gathering was called a *SQUANTUM*; a name, no doubt, of Indian origin, and in sound, very much in keeping with the character of the occasion.”





MORE ABOUT PICNICS!

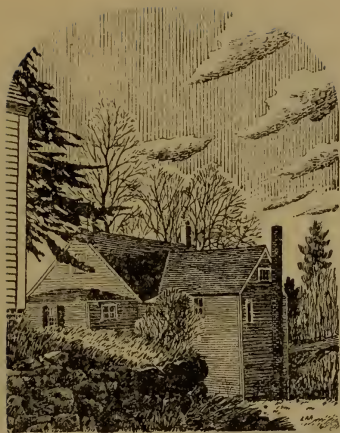


IN THE DIARY of The Rev. William Bentley are *the following entries*, describing picnics in Salem Bay or Salem Harbor:

“15 June 1791: Picnic at the Eastern Point. Went by boat. Sixty in party. Ate fish. . . . and after dinner till Tea, parties were engaged in Walking, dancing, singing & Quoting & Swinging & every amusement we could imagine. The Poets story of Tirandillo was realized. There was but one instrument of Music with us, which was a fiddle brought by its owner to pick up a few coppers.”

“29 June 1799: We had a good dish of Coffee and fried fish and reached Salem at nine o'clock.”

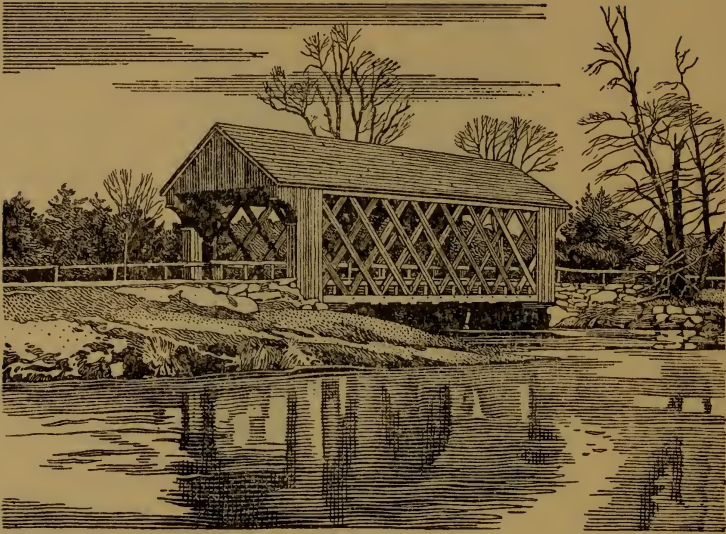




“These few words are on the subject of History, but I shall preface what is to be said by dealing first with a small matter of—shall we say—economics, namely: production and distribution. For in the field of History, as in manufacturing, we have these problems too.”

—EARLE W. NEWTON





AMERICAN NEWCOMEN, *interested always in economic and community history, is happy to have had opportunity to pay tribute to the imaginative genius which led to the creation of "Old Sturbridge Village" in Massachusetts. Here, amid woodlands, along streams, and beside ponds, one sees, as "living history," Eighteenth Century New England Today!*





THE NEWCOMEN SOCIETY *in North America*

MORE THAN 30 years ago, the late L. F. Loree (1858-1940) of New York, then dean of American railroad presidents, established a group now known as "American Newcomen" and interested in Material History, as distinguished from political history. Its objectives center in the beginnings, growth, development, contributions, and influence of Industry, Transportation, Communication, the Utilities, Mining, Agriculture, Banking, Finance, Economics, Insurance, Education, Invention, and the Law—these and correlated historical fields. In short, the background of those factors which have contributed or are contributing to the progress of Mankind.

The Newcomen Society in North America is a voluntary association, with headquarters in Uwchlan Township, Chester County, within the fox-hunting countryside of Eastern Pennsylvania and 32 miles West of the City of Philadelphia. Here also is located The Thomas Newcomen Library, a reference collection open for research and dealing with the subjects to which the Society devotes attention.

Meetings are held throughout the United States of America and across Canada at which Newcomen Addresses are presented by leaders in their respective fields. These manuscripts represent a broadest coverage of phases of Material History involved, both American and Canadian.

The approach in most cases has been a life-story of corporate organizations, interpreted through the ambitions, the successes and failures, and the ultimate achievements of those pioneers whose efforts laid the foundations of the particular enterprise.

The Society's name perpetuates the life and work of Thomas Newcomen (1663-1729), the British pioneer, whose valuable contributions in improvements to the newly invented Steam Engine brought him lasting fame in the field of the Mechanic Arts. The Newcomen Engines, whose period of use was from 1712 to 1775, paved a way for the Industrial Revolution. Newcomen's inventive genius preceded by more than 50 years the brilliant work in Steam by the world-famous James Watt.



Members of American Newcomen, when in Europe, are invited by the Dartmouth Newcomen Association to visit the home of Thomas Newcomen at Dartmouth in South Devonshire, England, where the festival of "Newcomen Day" is celebrated each year on the anniversary, August 16th, of his death.



*“The roads you travel so briskly
lead out of dim antiquity,
and you study the past chiefly because
of its bearing on the living present
and its promise for the future.”*

—LIEUTENANT GENERAL JAMES G. HARBORD,
K.C.M.G., D.S.M., LL.D., U.S. ARMY (RET.)

(1866-1947)

*Late American Member of Council at London
The Newcomen Society of England*





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Libraries
